



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

May 22 – 28, 2013



Contacts for renewing the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations: Israeli President Shimon Peres, American Secretary of State John Kerry, and PA Chairman Mahmoud Abbas at an economic conference in Jordan (Wafa News Agency, May 26, 2013).

Overview

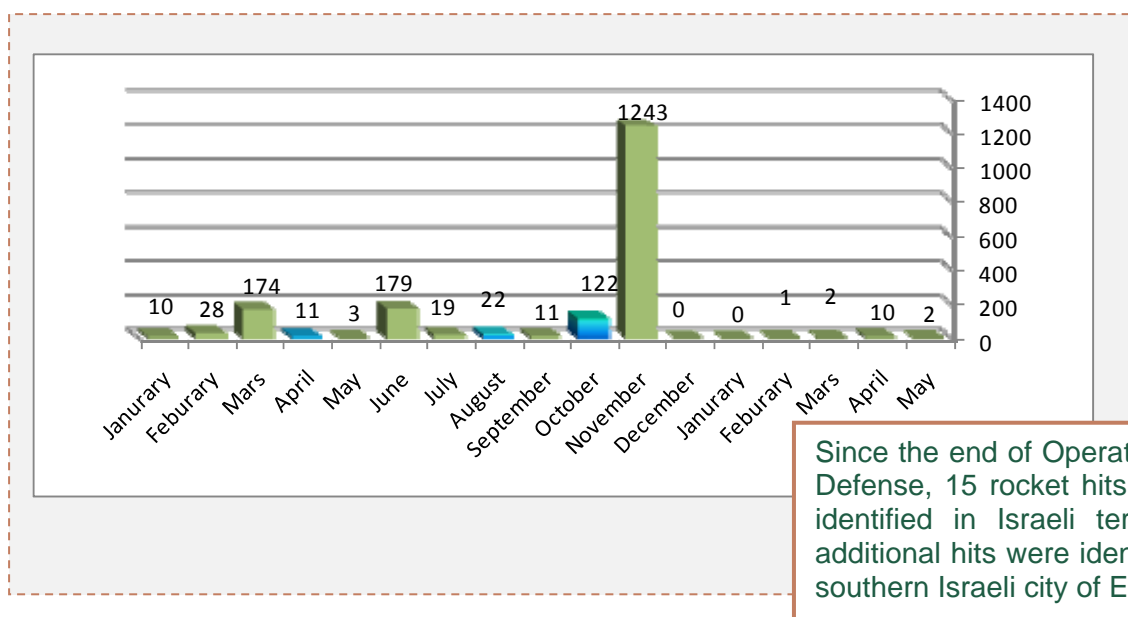
- This past week there was quiet along Israel's southern border. Violent confrontations and riots continued in Judea and Samaria between Palestinians and Israeli security forces, part of the "popular resistance."
- The visit of American Secretary of State John Kerry ended without a breakthrough. Mahmoud Abbas and senior figures in the PA repeated the litany of issues preventing the Palestinians from returning to the negotiating table: the continued construction in the Jewish towns and villages in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem, Israel's refusal to release the terrorist operative prisoners and the so-called "harassment from the settlers."

The Situation in Israel's South

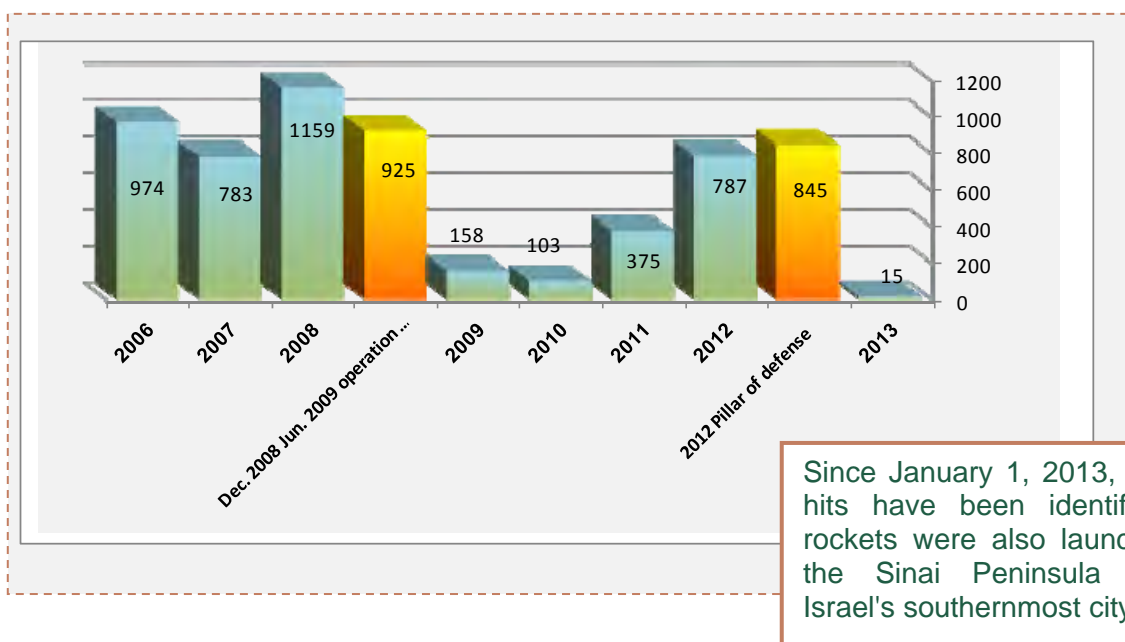
Rocket Fire on the Southern Border

- This past week Israel's southern border was quiet; no rocket or mortar shell hits were identified in Israeli territory.

Rocket Hits in Israeli Territory¹



Annual Distribution of Rocket Fire²



¹ As of May 28, 2013. The statistics do not include mortar shell fire.

² The statistics do not include mortar shell fire.

Judea and Samaria

Violence Continues

■ This past week violence and riots continued between Palestinians and the Israel security forces at the traditional friction points, part of the so-called "popular resistance." The Palestinian media reported a number of Palestinians were injured in the riots (Al-Hayat Al-Jadeeda and the Ma'an News Agency, May 24, 2013).



Palestinian youth throws stones at the IDF during the weekly demonstration in Nebi Saleh protesting the security fence (Wafa News Agency, May 24, 2013).

Developments in the Gaza Strip

Israel Again Extends Fishing Area

■ On May 23, 2013, the Israeli prime minister and defense minister instructed the IDF to **extend the fishing area of the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip from three to six miles**. It had been decreased following rocket fire attacking population centers in the western Negev on May 21, 2013 (Website of the Coordinator for Government Activities in the Territories, May 23, 2013).

■ Some of the local fisherman expressed satisfaction while others claimed it was a "media fraud," because in effect Israeli navy forces prevented fishing boats from going beyond the four and a half mile limit (Filastin al-Yawm, May 22, 2013).



Fishermen off the Gaza Strip coast (Filastin Al-'Aan, May 22, 2013)

Release of the Egyptian Soldiers Abducted in the Sinai Peninsula

- After a week of intense security activity and negotiations, as well as the mediation of local tribal sheikhs, **the seven Egyptian soldiers and policemen abducted in the Sinai Peninsula were released.** Colonel Ahmed Mohamed Ali, Egyptian military spokesman, said that they had been released without bloodshed, through negotiations and thanks to the efforts of Egyptian general intelligence (Facebook page of Colonel Ahmed Mohamed Ali, May 22, 2013).
- Hamas congratulated Egypt on the release of the soldiers:
 - **Ismail Haniya**, head of the de-facto Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip, sent his congratulations to Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi, the Egyptian security forces and the entire Egyptian people on the release of the soldiers. He also contacted the governor of the El Arish district to thank him for the considerate treatment received by the Palestinians who had been forced to wait on the Egyptian side of the Rafah crossing.
 - **Musa Abu Marzouq**, member of the Hamas political bureau, sent his congratulations to the Egyptian president and security forces. He demanded an apology from the Egyptian media, which had published accusations that Hamas was behind the abduction (Al-Youm Al-Sabea, May 22, 2013).
- After the captives had been released the Rafah crossing was reopened, having been closed for five days (Website of the Hamas administration ministry of the interior, May 22, 2013). With its opening Hamas spokesman **Taher al-Nunu** called for the suffering of the Palestinians to be ended and an increase in the number of

entrance and exit visas (Al-Ra'i TV, Kuwait, May 22, 2013). Once the crossing opened most of the Palestinians trapped on the Egyptian side returned to their homes in the Gaza Strip. In his Friday sermon Ismail Haniya called for Egypt to initiate a new policy regarding the Rafah crossing so that in the future it would not be influenced by internal Egyptian affairs (Al-Ayam, May 25, 2013).



The Rafah crossing terminal reopens to Palestinian traffic after the release of the abducted Egyptian soldiers (Filastin Al-'Aan, may 22, 2013).

The Gaza Strip Tunnels

■ A long article about the terrorist tunnels in the Gaza Strip (and not the smuggling tunnels along the Egypt-Gaza Strip border in the Rafah region) was written by "Abu Mu'tassem," represented as a tunnel planner and digger. In the article he claimed the tunnels throughout the Gaza Strip were subjected to strict management and registration. He also claimed that they were divided into categories according to how they were used (Ma'an News Agency, May 22, 2013):

- **Tunnels used for firing rockets:** He claimed that tunnels had been used to fire rockets mainly since the end of Operation Cast Lead, after rocket launchers proved themselves easy targets for the Israeli Air Force.
- Tunnels, he said, were also used as **hiding places**, as **locations for the storage of weapons**, for **camouflage** and to **trick the Israelis**.

A New School Curriculum for the Gaza Strip

■ **Jamal Abu Hisham**, advisor to the minister of education and higher education in the Hamas administration, told a meeting of the ministry of education that **new textbooks were being written** for the eighth and tenth grades. He said the new

books would be divided into five units and stress Palestinian history (Website of the Hamas ministry education, May 21, 2013):

- Palestinian history and the geography of historical Palestine (including the cities of Acre, Jaffa, Jerusalem and Beersheba).
 - Historic Arab battles in the new era and important Palestinian figures.
 - "The Zionist project" (the immigration of Jews to Palestine, "Jewish greed," massacres carried out by Israel, "Judaization").
 - The Palestinian resistance [i.e., terrorist organizations], its military [military-terrorist] wings, the first and second intifadas, Operation Cast Lead and Operation Pillar of Defense.
 - Politics: the founding of the PLO and the Palestinian Authority.
- Hamas will use the new curriculum to inculcate Palestinian youth with its ideology, fundamental to which is hostility to Israel, the refusal to accept Israel's existence, and the use of the "right of return" and the "resistance" [i.e., terrorism] as the main strategic tools to realize Palestinian aspirations. Alongside its indoctrination studies Hamas also provides students with formal and informal military training in both its schools and summer camps.³

The Palestinian Authority

Continuing American Attempts to Renew the Israeli-Palestinian Negotiations

- American Secretary of State John Kerry's visit to Israel and the PA and the round of talks he initiated ended without a breakthrough and without the renewal of the negotiations. After his visit Kerry said that in the near future the two sides had to take hard decisions if the negotiations were to be renewed because the current situation could not continue, and the leaders of both sides had to work to achieve peace (Al-Hayat Al-Jadeeda, May 25, 2013).

³ For further information see the May 8, 2013 bulletin ["Hamas has introduced a program in Gaza Strip schools called Al-Futuwwa, which provides military training for tens of thousands of adolescent boys."](#)



Mahmoud Abbas and John Kerry in Ramallah (Wafa News Agency, May 23, 2013).

- During their meetings with John Kerry, Mahmoud Abbas and other senior Palestinians repeatedly stressed the Palestinian commitment to the peace process, but also repeatedly elaborated on the issues preventing the Palestinians from returning to the negotiating table: **the continued construction in the Jewish towns and villages in Judea and Samaria, Israel's refusal to release terrorist operatives imprisoned in its jails, the continued building in Jerusalem and settler harassment of Palestinians** (Al-Ayam, May 24, 2013). Kerry also participated in an economic conference in Jordan, during which he spoke about a plan for Palestinian economic development, stating that it needed to be accompanied by a political process (Al-Hayat Al-Jadeeda, May 26, 2013).
- Palestinian sources reported that John Kerry's visit was not considered as having brought anything new to the region and that both sides had barricaded themselves behind their customary positions (Al-Ayam, May 24, 2013):
 - Speaking at the conference in Jordan, **Mahmoud Abbas** said that the Palestinians wanted a just peace based on the two-state solution. He repeated that the solution could only be effected if the Israeli "occupation" ended, the Palestinian prisoners were released, construction ended in the settlements, the settlers stopped harassing the Palestinians, the security fence were dismantled and an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital were established (Voice of Palestine Radio, May 25, 2013).
 - Interviewed by Mawtini Radio, **Saeb Erekat**, a member of the PLO's Executive Committee and head of the Palestinian negotiating team, said that the PA had made every possible effort to ensure the success of American

secretary of state's mission. Israel, however, he said, was sabotaging the efforts for the renewal of the negotiations by continuing to build in the settlements, and by refusing to return to the 1967 borders or release the Palestinian prisoners (Mawtini Radio website, May 25, 2013).

Mahmoud Abbas Presents Honorary Decoration to the Nayef Hawatmeh

■ While in Jordan Mahmoud Abbas presented **Nayef Hawatmeh**, secretary general of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), with an honorary decoration. The award was presented in accordance with an official presidential edict issued by Mahmoud Abbas, to show appreciation for Hawatmeh's "national role on behalf of the Palestinian cause and the Palestinian people and in appreciation of his efforts to raise the Palestinian flag during the phases of the Palestinian struggle" (Wafa News Agency, may 27, 2013).



Left: Mahmoud Abbas presents Nayef Hawatmeh with an honorary decoration. Right: The formal "presidential edict" (Wafa News Agency, May 27, 2013).

■ **The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), the terrorist organization headed by Nayef Hawatmeh, has been responsible for a series of deadly terrorist attacks, which killed and wounded many Israelis.** Among them were the school bus massacre of children from the northern village of Avivim (nine children killed, May 1970), the massacre of the school children in the northern town of Ma'alot (21 children killed, May 1974), the detonation of a booby-trapped wagon in Jerusalem (seven killed, 1975), the attack on an IDF post in the Gaza Strip (three soldiers killed, 2001), and the suicide bombing attack at the Geha Junction in Tel Aviv (four killed, 2003).

The Northern Arena

Report of Rocket Attack

■ Residents of the northern city of Metulla reported that in the late evening of May 26, 2013 they heard the shriek of a rocket and then an explosion, emanating from the region of Marjayoun in south Lebanon. No rocket hit was identified in Israeli territory. The media reported that a rocket had been fired from Marjayoun into Israeli territory. Lebanese army and UNIFIL forces searched the area (MTV, Al-Mayadeen, Sky News, May 27, 2013).

Propaganda Events

The Global March to Jerusalem (GMJ)

■ The popular committee of the GMJ in Jordan held a meeting to discuss the logistics of the march, scheduled for June 7, 2013. The meeting was attended by representatives of the Jordanian trade unions, which had announced they would participate. It will take place in the region of Suweima in the Jordan Valley⁴ (Facebook page of the GMJ, May 22, 2013).

⁴ The region of Suweima, north of the Dead Sea, close the Israeli border, is represented as the closest point in Jordan to Jerusalem. On December 25, 2011, the so-called "million-man march" was held there to demonstrate solidarity with Jerusalem.